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# A Romance of the Jewish East: The Ten Lost Tribes and *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* in Medieval Europe

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**Abstract**
This article draws together two events that appear in close proximity in the English historian Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*: Robert Grosseteste's translation of a second-century Greek apocryphal work, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the Mongol invasion of Eastern Europe. Both the Mongols, identified by Matthew Paris with the ten lost tribes of Jews, and the recovered work of scripture on the eschatological role of the twelve tribes, relate to the larger thirteenth-century vilification of the Jewish role in Christian hermeneutics. The article focuses in particular on the widely-circulated *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* as a text that resonates with contemporary Christian suspicions of all Hebrew non-biblical texts as dangerously subversive, as evidenced by the "trial" and burning of the Talmud in Paris in 1242. The *Testaments*, in their prophecies of a messianic future, allow medieval Christian readers to reconstruct a version of ancient Judaism that stands in stark contrast to contemporary Jews, whom writers like Grosseteste and Matthew Paris represent as unremittingly hostile.

**Keywords**
Matthew Paris, Grosseteste, Mongols, Jews, eschatology, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

In 1241-42, the Mongol army led by Chingis Khan's grandson, Batu, captured the major cities of Poland, Moravia, and Hungary; it also captured the vivid imagination of the English historian Matthew Paris.[1] In his first notice of the Mongols in the year 1240 in the *Chronica Majora*, Matthew

[1] I delivered earlier versions of this article to the Medieval Academy, the International Congress of Medieval Studies at Leeds, and the University of Toronto Centre for Medieval Studies. I would like to thank Suzanne Akbari, Bill North, and the two readers for this journal for their extremely helpful suggestions and comments.

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associates the invaders with the Paris master Peter Comestor's account of the ten lost tribes of Israel, Jews inclosed deep in the Caspian mountains by Alexander the Great, with the help of "the God of Israel."[2] For the year 1242, Matthew recounts a seemingly unrelated event, Robert Grosseteste's translation of the second-century apocryphal *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*: "At that same time, Robert, the Bishop of Lincoln, a man most expert in Latin and Greek, accurately translated *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* from Greek into Latin; they had been unknown for a long time and had been concealed by the envious Jews on account of the clear prophecies of the Savior contained within them."[3] As this article will demonstrate, the medieval Christian reception and transmission of the *Testaments*, as well as other works of biblical apocrypha, are intimately related to shifting attitudes toward Jews not only as textual scholars but also as representatives of the world beyond Europe's frontiers.[4]

Robert Stacey has called the period from 1240 to 1260 in England a "watershed" in Jewish-Christian relations, with the Jews' financial and social situation becoming increasingly desperate. Henry III's enormous tallages both weakened the Jewish community from within and sparked

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For a comprehensive treatment of Matthew Paris's views of Jews and Mongols, see Sophia Menache "Tartars, Jews, Saracens, and the Jewish-Mongol 'Plot' of 1241," *History*, 81 (1996): 319-42. The most thorough consideration of the Europe's encounter with the Mongols is Felicitas Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden : die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13 bis in das 15 Jahrhundert* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1994).

[2] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* [hereafter *CM*], ed. Henry R. Luard, 7 vols. (London: Longman, 1877), 4:76-8. The ten lost tribes refer to all except Judah and Benjamin, exiled "beyond the Euphrates" during the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities; Levi is only occasionally included as a tribe. The classic article is A. Neubauer, "Where Are the Ten Tribes?" *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1, nos. 1-4 (1898-99): 14-28, 95-114, 185-201, 408-23. For the many medieval versions of the story of Alexander's enclosure of Eastern nations in the Caucasian mountains, see Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy, 1932).

[3] "Ipsis quoque temporibus, episcopus Lincolniensis Robertus, vir in Latino et Greco pertissimus, Testamenta duodecim Patriarcharum de Greco fideli interpretatione transtulit in Latinum, quae per multa tempora incognita et abscondita fuerunt per invidiam Judaeorum, propter manifestas prophetias de salvatore in eis contentas." *CM*, 4: 232. All translations in this article are mine unless otherwise noted.

[4] I have addressed similar issues with regard to another first-century apocryphal text, *Joseph and Aseneth*, in my article "'Your name will no longer be Aseneth': Apocrypha, Anti-Martyrdom, and Jewish Conversion in Thirteenth-Century England," *Speculum*, 81 (July 2006): 734-53.

the resentment of Christian debtors as Jews were forced to collect more quickly.[5] The situation in Northern France was no better; Louis IX continued earlier Capetian policies toward Jews, issuing a series of edicts severely limiting Jewish usury while at the same time confiscating debts owed to Jews.[6] Both the French and English monarchs also avidly pursued the conversion of Jews under these circumstances and not only provided support for "new Christians" but also personally sponsored the converts' baptisms.[7] The attack on Jewish belief as well as finance culminated in Louis's support, beginning in 1239, for the Church's campaign against the Talmud and other extrabiblical Jewish texts.[8]

Throughout Europe, these years also marked, as Israel Yuval has argued, a collision between the respective eschatological hopes of Jews and Christians. The year 1240 was the end of the fifth millennium in the Jewish calendar, and writers since Moshe Ha-Darshan in *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati* in the early eleventh century and Judah ben Barzillai in his commentary on *Sefer Yetzira* in the twelfth century had predicted that the Messiah would come before or in 5000.[9] Yuval brings together the various fragments of the Jewish messianic movement to demonstrate its novel adaptations of Christian material: for example, he cites an early thirteenth-century text from the French Tosafist circle of R. Isaac ben Abraham (Rizba), "Homilies of King Messiah, Gog, and Magog" that calls for an immigration of Torah scholars to the Holy Land, like the one that actually took place in 1212, in order to prepare for the arrival of the Messiah. The text imitates the rhetoric of the Crusades, portraying the Messiah as a kind of Jewish "crusader" king who will destroy both the Christian and Muslim forces: "And the warriors of Israel will be gathered unto him from the four corners of the

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[5] Robert Stacey, "1240-60: A Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?" *Historical Research*, 145 (1988): 135-50.

[6] William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 128-141; Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 100-53.

[7] Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews*, 149-50. Robert Stacey, "The Conversion of Jews to Christianity in Thirteenth-Century England," *Speculum* 67 (1992): 263-83.

[8] Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France, 124-31.*

[9] Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2000), 267-305. See also Yuval, "Jewish Messianic Expectations towards 1240 and Christian Reactions," in *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, ed. Peter Schafer and Mark Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 105-21.

earth and he will assemble a great army and smite the princes of Ishmael and Edom that are in Jerusalem and evict the gentiles."[10] Yuval cites an equally remarkable text from the same period that includes Jesus himself in the Jewish messianic program. In this account, Jesus has a conversation with a *bat kol* (divine voice) just before his death, which reveals that the Crucifixion is positioned in the middle of history, between the giving of the Law to Moses and the coming of the Messiah; the era of Jesus—that is, Christian Rome—is scheduled to end in 1240/5000.[11]

Yuval contends that such messianic ideas among the Jews triggered a reaction from Christians, whose own apocalyptic thinking was informed by the continuing ideals of the Crusades to the Holy Land and the messianic programs of Joachim of Fiore, which predicted the coming of Antichrist and with it the beginning of the "Age of the Holy Sprit" in 1260.[12] As he trenchantly puts it, for Christians "Islam was the political enemy, but Judaism was the eschatological enemy."[13] The writings of Matthew Paris and Robert Grosseteste, eminent English clerics with both a great interest and direct involvement in international politics, illuminate how this thirteenth-century "contest" over the end of history played out with regard to ideas about the role of Jewish scripture within Christianity and the meanings of Jewish Diaspora.

Matthew's voluminous history of thirteenth-century Europe and the Crusader States assigns the Mongols a decisive role in shaping a newly negative image of the Jews, based largely on ideas of Diaspora. In his initial account of the Mongols, Matthew admits that while they are said not to use the Hebrew language or follow Mosaic law, he nevertheless thinks it possible that the fierce, cannibalistic people he describes in gruesome detail are in fact the Jews who rebelled against their Law to follow "alien gods and

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[10] Yuval, "Jewish Messianic Expectations," 107; Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 278-9.

[11] Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 274-5, 301-2. The text that Yuval cites is found in a thirteenth-century commentary on *Pirke Avot*; he also discusses another text, from an Oxford manuscript, that situates Jesus in a Jewish messianic narrative.

[12] Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 302-3; see also Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 45-58; Felicitas Schmieder, "Nota Sectam Maometicam Atterendam a Tartaris et Christianis: The Mongols as Non-believing Apocalyptic Friends around the Year 1260," *Journal of Millennial Studies*, 1 (1998), at http://www.mille.org/publications/summer98/summer98.html.

[13] Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 300.

strange rites."[14] As Robert Lerner has shown, Matthew's imagination in this passage resembles the well-known "Cedar of Lebanon" prophecy that originated with the Cistercians in the midst of the Mongol invasion of Hungary; according to this murky text, "[t]he sons of Israel will be liberated from captivity. A certain people called 'without a head,' or reputed to be wanderers will come."[15] From this point in the *Chronica* on, the St. Albans monk weaves together a series of identifications between Mongols and Jews that not only attempts to inscribe the Mongols into a preexisting sense of Europe's borders but also reconfigures European Jews as agents of barely understood Eastern powers.[16] Like Peter Comestor's *Historica Scholastica*, both his account and the earlier Hungarian prophecy rework an original narrative that assigns the ten tribes a cataclysmic role in the final act of history; according to the most widely circulated apocalyptic text in Europe, the Byzantine *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*, the tribes will break out of the "Gates of the North" shortly before the coming of Antichrist and the End of Days.[17]

In the same vein, Matthew's notice of Grosseteste's translation of *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* casts Jews in a sinister role and amplifies the importance of the bishop's (and his local helper's) linguistic skills:

> Because of the scheming of the Jews with their ancient malice, the text was unavailable to Christians at the time of St. Jerome and the other blessed interpreters. However, this glorious text—strengthening the Christian faith and greatly confounding the Jews—was translated plainly and clearly by the bishop, word by word from Greek into Latin, with the help of master Nicholas the Greek, a clerk of St. Albans.[18]

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[14] *CM*, 4:77-8.

[15] Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy: The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 16. See also Lerner's discussion of Matthew Paris's own version of this prophecy, which is not explicitly linked to the Mongols, 26-31.

[16] The connection between the Mongols and Jews appears to have been debated in monastic circles. Like Matthew, Richer of Sens mentions the idea of the Mongols as the Jews inclosed by Alexander the Great in proximity to accounts of local Jewish atrocities, including his unique version of a ritual murder accusation at Hagenau in 1236 that involved Jews killing three Christian boys during Passover. *Richeri Gesta Senoniensis Ecclesiae*, ed. G. Waitz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, no. 25 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1880), 249-345; see 310, 324.

[17] On Pseudo-Methodius and his Syrian precursor Jacob of Serugh, see Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 56-9; 70-6.

[18] "Nec tempore beati Jeronomi vel alicuius sancti interpretis ad notitiam Christianorum,

This passage, couched amid the years of Matthew's growing fascination with the Mongols, draws together the concept of Jewish malevolence with an ancient text that itself addresses the eschatological role of the ten lost tribes along with their "known" counterparts, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. At the same time that the *Chronica* identifies the ten lost tribes with the Eastern invaders, it understands the *Testaments* as a text that reinscribes the figures of the twelve Jewish patriarchs into an apocalyptic discourse already concerned with their Diaspora to far Eastern territories.

Grosseteste's translation participated in a larger Christian reevaluation of the role of extrabiblical texts in determining the Church's relations with Jews. The examination and burning of the Talmud in Paris, ordered by Pope Gregory IX, epitomized a growing suspicion of Jewish texts that supposedly replaced the Hebrew Bible with errors and blasphemies. The thirty-five articles against the Talmud, drawn up from relevant extracts by the convert Nicholas Donin and presented as evidence at the 1240 trial, provide a condemnation of rabbinic textual practices that focus on the rabbis' corrupting and hiding "authentic" scripture.[19] Among the charges against the Talmud, along with its blasphemies against Jesus and insults toward Christians, were that it held that rabbinic scholars and scribes were superior to the prophets, that scholars can change the law, and that it prohibits children from studying the Bible in favor of the Talmud itself.[20] In both the Latin and Hebrew accounts of the trial, the nature of the Talmud's scriptural authority is central; for the Christians, it represents a text that defies the traditional Augustinian narrative of the Jews' role in the Christian historical frame.

Augustine's doctrine of Jewish "witness" based on an interpretation of Psalm 59:12—"Slay them not lest at any time they forget your law; scatter

machinante Judaeorum antiquorum malitia, potuit quomodolibet devenire. Illum igitur gloriosum tractatum, ad robur fidei Christianae et ad majorem Judeaorum confusionem, transtulit plene et evidenter episcopus memoratus de Graeco, verbo ad verbum ein Latimun, coadjuvante magistro Nicholao Graeco, clerico abbatis Sancti Albani." *CM*, 4:232-33.

[19] The thirty-five articles against the Talmud were collected later (1248) by another convert, Thibaut de Sezanne, as *Extractiones de Talmud*; the document is published in Isidore Loeb, "La Controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud," *REJ*, 1 (1880): 247-61; 2 (1881): 248-70; 3 (1882): 39-57.

[20] Judah Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial: The Disputation at Paris in the Year 1240," *JQR*, 47 (1956): 58-76, 145-69. Rosenthal compares the Latin accusations against the original Hebrew/Aramaic passages from the Talmud. See also Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 317-63.

them in your might"—establishes the connection between Hebrew texts and the Diaspora:

> [The Jews], having been vanquished by the Romans, completely deprived of their kingdom, and scattered throughout the world so that they are not lacking anywhere, are testimony for us through their own scriptures that we have not contrived the prophecies concerning Christ.... For we realize that on account of this testimony, which they unwillingly provide for us by having and preserving these books, they are scattered among all the nations, wherever the church of Christ extends itself.[21]

The Diaspora is not only the Jews' punishment, in that they are enslaved politically to other nations, but also the Christians' means of proving and circulating the truth of Hebrew prophecies of the Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus. Elsewhere, Augustine figures the Jews as servants who carry their masters' books; one of the great anxieties that emerges in the Talmud trial is that the Jews actually carry, interpret, and transmit Hebrew books of their own that contain an entirely different Jewish eschatological narrative. Pope Gregory's 1239 letter to the Bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne, instructing him to confiscate all copies of the Talmud stresses this view of "the chief cause that holds the Jews obstinate in their perfidy":

> If what is said about the Jews of France and of the other lands is true, no punishment would be sufficiently great or sufficiently worthy of their crime. For they, so we have heard, are not content with the Old Law which God gave to Moses in writing: they even ignore it completely, and affirm that God gave another Law which is called "Talmud," that is "Teaching," which was handed down to Moses orally. Falsely they allege that it was implanted within their minds and, unwritten, was there preserved until certain men came, whom they call "Sages" and "Scribes," who, fearing that this Law may be lost from the minds of men through forgetfulness, reduced it to writing, and the volume of this by far exceeds the text of the Bible. In this is contained matter so abusive and so unspeakable that it arouses shame in those who mention it and horror in those who hear it.[22]

In the Hebrew account of the Talmud trial, the *Vikuaḥ Rabbenu Yehiel*, the author, Rabbi Joseph ben Nathan Official, represents the famous Tosafist

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[21] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XVIII. Cohen cites and translates the passage in *Living Letters of the Law*, 32; for more on Augustine's understanding of Jewish Diaspora, see Paula Frediksen, "*Excaecati Occulta Justitia Dei*: Augustine on the Jews and Judaism," *Journal of Early Christian Studie*s, 3 (1995): 299-324.

[22] Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (New York: Hermon Press, 1966), 1:241.

scholar Rabbi Yehiel of Paris defending the Talmud as an interpretation of the Torah inseparable from the practice of Judaism. The rabbi further claims that the Talmud was familiar to St. Jerome and therefore not a new threat to Christianity.[23] Donin's attacks, however, reveal that one of the main Christian concerns is that the Talmud asserts a fundamental challenge to the traditional understanding of Hebrew prophecy in the form of an alternative Jewish messianic program. One of the charges against the Talmud in the Latin account is that in various places it claims that "only one who studies the Talmud will inherit the future world."[24] At one point, the ecclesiastical judges in the Hebrew account ask Rabbi Yeḥiel if Christians can even be saved according to his religion; at another, Donin asks why so many Jews have been massacred by crusaders in Brittany, Anjou, and Poitiers if they are God's "chosen people," or literally "treasured people" (*am segula*).[25] To the latter, Rabbi Yeḥiel replies that at the end of days, God will perform great miracles for the Jews as he did at the exodus from Egypt. As Robert Chazan points out, while this response is "highly traditional," it also emphasizes the Jewish view of a future, perhaps imminent, messianic redemption.[26] Indeed, in the *Vikuaḥ*'s notice that the examination took place during the week of the Torah reading *Parshat Balak*, Yuval finds a subtle reference to an earlier French messianic prophecy of 1240/5000 based on an interpretation of Balaam's words to Balak in Numbers 24:14: "[L]et me inform you of what this people will do to your people in the days to come."[27]

In both the proceedings against the Talmud and the writings of Matthew Paris and Robert Grosseteste, the twelfth-century monastic model of the Jewish "informant" who provides Christian exegetes with a translation

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[23] *Vikuaḥ Rabbenu Yeḥiel mi-Pariz* [Hebrew], ed. Reuben Margoliot (Brooklyn: Ateret, 1974); Robert Chazan, "The Hebrew Report on the Trial of the Talmud: Information and Consolation," in *Le Brûlement du Talmud à Paris, 1242-1244*, ed. Rene-Samuel Sirat (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 79-93.

[24] Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial," 154-5.

[25] *Vikuaḥ Rabbenu Yeḥiel mi-Pariz*, 22.

[26] Chazan, "The Hebrew Report on the Trial of the Talmud," 91.

[27] Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 271-2. This interpretation of Balaam's prophecy depends on a numerological play of words between "the days to come" and "after five days" (read as a thousand years for each day, per Psalm 90:4: "For in Your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that has passed"). In a further gesture of defiance described in the *Vikuaḥ Rabbenu Yeḥiel mi-Pariz*, 25. Rabbi Yeḥiel ends the debate by recalling the martyrdom of Rabbi Hanina ben Teradion, who was burned wrapped in a Torah scroll.

of the "literal sense" of the Hebrew Bible is overshadowed by a counter-image of the Jew who uses the language of the Bible to subvert and conceal the true Christian narrative. In the school of exegesis championed by Hugh of St-Victor and especially his English student Andrew, the present-day Jewish interpreter is central to the Christian understanding of the Old Testament. Victorine exegesis, while not free of anti-Jewish invective, often presents rabbinic readings of scripture without comment as a means of providing access to Hebrew learning.[28] In a commentary on Joel, for example, Hugh even cites knowledge of the Talmud as evidence of authority: his source is "a certain Jew, fluent and expert in the fables of Gamaliel."[29] Andrew of St-Victor's immense commentaries on the prophetic books are laden with references to his *Hebrei* or Jewish interlocutors, who provide him with translations and their sages' interpretations of the text's literal meaning. Andrew's works were almost immediately transmitted to England and his "judaizing" exegesis carried on by his student Herbert of Bosham and others, including the Paris master Stephen Langton, later archbishop of Canterbury.[30]

Matthew regards the local French-speaking Jews whom he likely encountered around St. Albans not as clarifiers of scripture, but rather, in keeping with his geographical imagination, part of an international conspiracy connected by Hebrew writing.[31] Matthew makes the precise nature of the Jewish element of the Mongol threat explicit in two texts. The first, from 1242, is a letter that he acquired, sent from a Hungarian bishop to Bishop William of Auvergne in Paris, informing him of what he had supposedly learned from two Mongol prisoners; this letter took on a textual life of its own beyond Matthew's *Liber Additamentorum* (the appendix of documents to his *Chronica Majora*), appearing also in the Annals of the

[28] Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1964), esp. 83-195; see also Michael Signer's introduction to Andrew of St-Victor's *Expositionem in Ezechielem*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis [hereafter CCCM] (Turnholt: Brepols, 1991).

[29] Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 103. On the use of the term "Gamaliel" by medieval Christian writers to refer to the Talmud, see Ch. Merchavia, *The Church Versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature: 500-1248* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1970), 208-12.

[30] On the manuscript transmission of Andrew's works, see Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 175-85.

[31] Sophia Menache, "Matthew Paris's Attitudes Toward Anglo-Jewry," *Journal of Medieval History*, 23 (1997): 139-62.

Cistercian abbey of Waverley and later in a manuscript from the monastery of Christ Church at Canterbury that includes a number of other texts about Jews. The second is the celebrated story of a plot by Jews of the German-Roman Empire under Frederick II to smuggle weapons to the Mongol armies in 1241.[32] A suggestion of the practical uses to which Matthew's work was put appears in the Chronicle of St. Benet of Hulme: in 1258, Simon of Montfort, the Earl of Leicester, received a tract on the "history and customs of the Mongols," made up of texts from the *Liber Additamentorum*. The tract's emphasis on the Mongols' military strength supports J. R. Maddicott's suggestion that Grosseteste's proposal to Montfort in 1251 for a new crusade "for the liberation of souls" was aimed at Central Asia.[33]

The Hungarian bishop's letter recounts that the Mongols informed him that since they have no written language of their own, they use Hebrew writing (*literas Judaeorum habent*), which they began to learn when they set out to conquer the world. When he asks who taught them, they reply that their teachers were "certain pale men who often fasted, wore long robes, and bothered nobody."[34] He further concludes that these men are the long-lost Pharisees and Sadducees, since much of what the Mongols told him accords with what he knows of those groups' "superstitions." Although he ascertains that the Mongols themselves do not follow any dietary code and eat frogs, dogs, and snakes, the bishop nevertheless anxiously imagines them as converts to a kind of Judaism, now persecuting the friars sent from Hungary to convert them to Christianity. The so-called Pharisee and Sadducee missionaries, whom Peter Jackson identifies as Uighur Buddhist monks, have reached the Mongols ahead of the Franciscans and Dominicans and have given them not the Mosaic Law, but rather the Hebrew language, as their principal tool of world domination.[35] If these lost Jews

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[32] For an overview, see J. J. Saunders, "Matthew Paris and the Mongols," in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 116-32.

[33] *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: Longman, 1859), 197; Maddicott, *Simon of Montfort* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 98-9.

[34] "Quaesivi qui essent illi qui docent eos literas; dixerunt quod essent homines pallidi qui multum jejunant, vestes longas portant, et nullos offendunt." *CM*, 6 (*Additamenta*): 75-6.

[35] Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410* (Harlow: Longman, 2005), 145-6. See Willis Johnson on pale, melancholy Jews in "The Black Sickness" (unpublished manuscript).

resemble the stereotypical "pale" melancholic, postexilic Jews of Europe, imagined to be sick from the blood they lose in a bodily flux as punishment for killing Christ, they also resemble the "scholars and scribes" invoked in the Christian documents of the Talmud trial who change the Law to suit their own purposes.

William of Auvergne, who two years earlier had served as one of the judges in the interrogation of the four French rabbis who formally defended the Talmud, would have likely received this news as a confirmation of his worst fears. In the *Vikuaḥ*, the author deploys a triumphant view of the Jewish Diaspora that expresses a shared cultural fantasy: Rabbi Yeḥiel, addressing the clerical judges and assembled French courtiers, declares: "If you inflict your hatred upon us, our dispersion is spread to the nethermost part of the world. This Torah of ours is in Babylonia, Media, Greece, and the Islamic world. Indeed, it is to be found among the seventy peoples on the nether side of the River Cush. Our bodies lie in your hands but not our souls."[36] The rabbi's geographic imagination, like Matthew Paris's, encompasses both the known and unknown world—in this case the Jewish realms of Ethiopia, familiar in Europe from the fantastical early medieval Hebrew travel texts of Eldad Ha-Dani. In Eldad's account of the Jewish world, the warlike tribes of Dan, Gad, Naphtali, and Asher inhabit Ethiopia; on the other side of the legendary river Sambatyon, the Levites, or "Children of Moshe," live in a utopia of perfect faith and equality, speaking Hebrew only.[37]

Much of the same geopolitical logic informs Matthew's account of the so-called Jewish-Mongol Plot of 1241, which, as Sophia Menache has shown, contains an even more plausible echo of actual Jewish eschatological hopes about the Mongol invasion.[38] Matthew takes pains in this narrative to construct an authentic-sounding Jewish voice, a leader who addresses his co-conspirators:

> Brothers, you are the seed of illustrious Abraham, the vineyard of the Lord of *Sabaoth*, whom our God *Adonay* has allowed for so long to be oppressed by Christian rule. But now the time of our liberation is here, and by God's judgment we will in turn oppress the Christians so that the remnant of Israel may be saved. For now our brothers,

[36] Chazan, "The Hebrew Report on the Trial of the Talmud," 92.

[37] Joseph Dan, *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 47-61.

[38] Menache, "Tartars, Jews, Saracens, and the Jewish-Mongol 'Plot' of 1241," 336-8.

> namely those tribes of Israel formerly inclosed, have gone forth to subject the entire world to themselves and to us.[39]

The plot thickens into the German Jews' attempt to smuggle weapons to the Mongols in barrels, deceiving the Christian rulers by claiming that the "Jewish" Mongols, would only drink wine produced by other Jews; they then promise to poison the Mongol "inhuman enemies" and save the Christians from their "imminent tyrannical pillaging."[40] The nefarious plan almost succeeds but is foiled by a bridgekeeper suspicious of the Jews' claim to be acting "for the good of the empire" (*pro utilitate imperii*). Matthew reveals the Jews' lethal hypocrisy as inherent in the way they move between two languages, Hebrew (or his imagination thereof) among themselves and the vernacular in trying to ingratiate themselves with the Christians. Matthew here combines elements of what he vaguely knows about English Jews—that is, the *halakhic* (Jewish legal) prohibition against wine produced by non-Jews—with the disturbing rumors about the Jews' own

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[39] "Fratris, qui estis semen Abrahae praeclari, vinea domini Sabaoth, Deus noster Adonay nos diu sub potestate Christianorum permisit affligi. Sed nunc venit tempus quo liberamur, ut nos vice versa Dei judicio et ispsos opprimamus, ut salvi fiant reliquae Israel." *CM*, 4:131-32.

A modern version of this kind of ventriloquized "Jewish" voice is to be found in the nineteenth-century forgery *The Protocols of Zion*, which also involves a meeting of representatives of "the twelve tribes of Israel": "The intellectuals of the *goyim* will puff themselves up with their knowledge and without any logical verification of them will put into effect all the information available from science, which our agenteur specialists have cunningly pieced together for the purpose of educating their minds in the direction we want. Do not suppose for a moment that these statements are empty words: think carefully of the successes we arranged for Darwinism, Marxism, Nietzsche-ism. To us Jews at any rate, it should be plain to see what a disintegrating importance these directives have had. . . . By all these means we shall so wear down the *goyim* they will be compelled to offer us international power of a nature that by its position will enable us without any violence gradually to absorb all the state forces of the world and to form a super-government. In place of the rulers of today, we shall set up a bogey which will be called the Super-Government administration. Its hands will reach out in all directions like nippers and organization will be of such colossal dimensions that it cannot fail to subdue all the nations of the world." From *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, trans. Victor E. Marsden; quoted in Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor About the Jews: Reflections on Antisemitism and the "Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion"* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000), 13.

[40] Matthew again "records" the Jews' speech here: "Nos autem ipsos inhumanos et hostes publicos auferre de medio cupientes, et vos Christianos ab imminenti eorum tyrannical depopulatione liberare. . . ." *CM*, 4:132.

messianic expectations that, as Yuval shows, were circulating widely in Christian Europe. For example, in a contemporary letter from Sicily quoted by various scholars as an example of Jewish interpretation of the Mongols, the writer refers to "emissaries of the inclosed ones [*ha-genuzim*], bringing a document written in Hebrew with them."[41] Likewise, a famous work from the 1260s by the Spanish poet Meshullam ben Solomon da Piera, "The Inclosed Kinsmen" ("Ha-aḥim ha-genuzim"), celebrates the earlier Mongol victories "to the border of Ashkenaz" as the fulfillment of the prophecies of Ezekiel, a prelude to the messianic time[42] For Matthew, then, the Mongols represent not only an overwhelming military force but also a specifically Jewish threat to Christian messianic narrative stability. The Mongols' world-conquering ambitions seek to replace a Christian eschatology that encompasses the Jews' final conversion with a Jewish eschatology that celebrates the final union of the twelve tribes.

The implications of Matthew's understanding of the Mongols as quasi Jews for the scriptural economy become clear in a sensational event he relates in 1244: the discovery in London of a murdered boy with Hebrew letters inscribed on the skin of his legs, arms, and chest:

> Many who had gathered to wonder at this spectacle, and not being able to read the letters but knowing that they were Hebrew, called for Jewish converts who lived in the house founded for them in London by the king. And they, valuing life and limbs, out of honor, love, and fear of the lord king, revealed this writing without a figment of falsehood.... And when these converts had read what was written and studied and reread it (there were letters which because of the extension and contraction of skin and flesh were stretched here and there and misshapen by various distortions and therefore not legible), they discovered the names of the father and mother of the boy—but

[41] Menache, "Tartars, Jews, Saracens," 334; Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 293-97. A concise version of rabbinic tradition about the ten tribes is in *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit* 72:6 (Vayetze): "R Judah b. R. Simon said: the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were not exiled to the same place as were the other ten tribes. The ten tribes were exiled beyond the river Sambatyon, whereas the tribes of Judah and Benjamin are dispersed in all countries." *Midrash Rabbah Genesis*, trans. H. Freedman, 2 vols. (London: Soncino, 1983), 1:84.

[42] Haim Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence* [Hebrew], 2 (Tel Aviv: Bialik Institute, 1956-59), 2:317-18. Excerpts from this poem and other materials on the Mongols are in A. Z. Aescholy, *Jewish Messianic Movements* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1956), 212-20. See also Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998),58-100. On Meshuallam, see James Lehman "Polemic and Satire in the Poetry of the Maimonidean Controversy," *Prooftexts*, 1 (1981): 133-51.

> without surnames—and that they had sold him to the Jews, but to whom or for what reason they could not figure out.[43]

This bizarre anecdote—with its telling lack of specific identities—transforms the already well-known genre of the ritual murder or crucifixion of a Christian child by Jews into a grisly parodic account of interpretation and translation. The boy's body itself is a manuscript—uncomfortably like both the Hebrew Bible and the Mongols' supposed Hebrew writings—covered with a script written by one set of Jews and dependent upon another set for reception and proper "study." The role of the converts from Henry III's *domus* is, to say the least, ambiguous; like the Jews involved in the Mongol plot, they speak in two languages but use them both to obscure the truth. Matthew ironically exaggerates their devotion to their king and new faith, yet emphasizes their failure to reveal a clear interpretation of the text. While the burden of anxiety falls equally here on both the condition of the manuscript and the sincerity of the newly Christian readers, the lurid anecdote's predominant idea is Jewish textual violence: the relationship between Hebrew writing and the ongoing torments of Christ, the collaboration for profit of Christians with Jews, and the unreliability of Jewish informants.

The same theme of a malevolent Jewish textual tradition appears in a different guise in Matthew's report of Grosseteste's translation of *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Matthew, most likely following Grosseteste himself, characterizes the text through a fictive genealogy by which it was originally written, like the canonical biblical prophecies, in Hebrew rather than Greek: "But the Greeks, the most diligent researchers of all scriptures, were the first to become aware of this text, and translated it from Hebrew into Greek and so preserved it until the present time."[44] The chronicler

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[43] "Ad quod spectaculum cum plures convenirent admirentes, et nescirent literas legere, scientes quia literae Hebraicae fuerunt, advocabant converses Judaeos, qui domum, quam dominus rex Londoniis fundaverat, inhabitabant; ut ipsi sicut vitam aut membra dilegebant, pro honore, amore, et timore domini Regis, sine figmento falsitatis scripturam illam aperirent.... Et cum adducerentur dicti conversi ad legendum quae inscripta errant, et studerent ut perlegerent, (errant enim literae propter extensionem at contractionem cutis et carnis huc illucque projectae et multipliciter exagitate, deformate, et iam non legibiles, verum nomen patris et matris pueruli, suppressis cognominibus, inscriptum reperierunt, et quod venditus fuit puer Judaeis, sed quibus, vel ad quid, non poterant investigare." *CM*, 4:377.

[44] "Sed Graeci, omnium scriptorum diligentissimi investigators, primi in notitiam illius scripti devenientes, illud de Hebraeo in Graecum transtulerunt, et penes eos usque in

thus anticipates this mysterious work's contentious modern reception, with rival claims for its Christian or Jewish origins.

*The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are, as the name suggests, a collection of "copies" of the last words of the twelve sons of Jacob, each containing ethical exhortations and accounts of the eschatological events that await the twelve tribes. The individual patriarchs frequently cite the *Books of Enoch* as their source of prophetic knowledge for how their descendants will transgress against God. In proposing a Jewish scribal subculture as the background of the text's composition in Palestine, David Frankfurter stresses: "[T]he *Testaments* invoke the authority of literature: books of Enoch, old literary genres, and the mystique of literary transmission."[45] The *Testaments* are also marked by an emphasis on the importance of Levi—representing the priesthood and the law—to Jewish eschatology, and on the double rule of Levi and Judah, the priestly and kingly tribes from which the Messiah will emerge. The Messiah, who will bring the gentiles into Israel, is described in several of the testament*s* in terms that explicitly parallel the Christian Gospels. Likewise, the testaments of Levi and Benjamin refer to a "savior of the world" (*salvator mundi*) who will be murdered by their wicked descendents. The Testament of Benjamin also includes a prophecy of a new Temple in which the twelve tribes and all the nations will be gathered until God sends his "only begotten."[46] Modern critical debate about the origins of the *Testaments* has been fierce, with opposing groups of scholars claiming the text as either exclusively "Jewish" (with a date as early as 150 BCE) with much later "Christian"

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nostra tempora reservarunt." *CM*, 4:232. For details about the Greek manuscript of the *Testaments* that Grosseteste obtained (now Cambridge University Library Ff I.24, fols. 203r-61v), see Marinus de Jonge, "Robert Grosseteste and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 42 (1991): 115-25.

[45] Frankfurter, "Beyond 'Jewish Christianity': Continuing Religious Sub-Cultures of the Second and Third Centuries and Their Documents," in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 131-43.

[46] "Verumtamen in parte vestra fiet templum dei et gloriosum erit in vobis. Quam ipse dominus accipiet regnum. Et duodecim tribus ille congregabunt. Et omnes gentes usque quo altissimus mittat salutare suum in visitatione unigeniti." *Testamenta Duodecim Patriarcharum filiorum Jacob, e Greco in Latinum Versa Roberto Lincolniensi Episcopo Interprete* (Augsburg: Johan Miller, 1520), fol. F iii. For a literal English translation of the original Greek, see the version of M. de Jonge in *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, ed. H. F. D. Sparks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 505-600.

interpolations or as exclusively "Christian" (with a date as late as 200 CE).[47] Neither of these models is satisfactory, however, as Frankfurter convincingly argues, because the text is actually from a period (late second century CE) and milieu that pre-dates a firm boundary between "Judaism" and "Christianity." The *Testaments*, as he points out, "clearly seek to revitalize some assortment of Jewish values under the aegis of the twelve tribes of Israel" but also celebrate Christ as a "priestly savior" of both Jews and Gentiles.[48]

The *Testaments* are, therefore, a product of the Hellenic "Jewish Life of the Logos," to use Daniel Boyarin's provocative phrase—a hybrid frozen between the two nascent religions of Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity from the period before they became firm orthodoxies in the third and fourth centuries. The *Testaments* are both thoroughly Jewish in their sources, similar in particular to testamentary material from the Qumran scrolls, *and* dependent on the idea of Christ as Messiah and universal savior. In Boyarin's study of the emergence of a distinct Judaism and Christianity, he details at length the common pre-rabbinic Jewish belief in a divine hypostasis, be it Wisdom, Logos, or, as in the *Testaments*, a son of God. For early Jewish Christians and non-Christians alike, belief in a "second God" became heretical only with the rabbis' rejection of Logos theology as a type of heresy.[49] Although Christian writers were evidently unaware of it, the *Testaments* had a separate transmission history in Hebrew among European Jews who had rediscovered and translated the text; Moshe Ha-Darshan of Narbonne included material from the testaments of Naphtali, Benjamin, Zebulun, and Judah in *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati* in the eleventh century, and a different version of the Testament of Naphtali circulated in later medieval Ashkenaz. The reappearance of these Greek texts in Hebrew in the Middle Ages signals the larger effort by Jews to reclaim Second Temple writings from Christian discourse.[50]

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[47] For an overview of scholarship see Robert A. Kugler, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); see also John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 174-85.

[48] Frankfurter, "Beyond 'Jewish Christianity,'" 140-1.

[49] Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), esp. 112-27.

[50] *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati*, ed. Ch. Albeck (Jerusalem:, Mekitse Nirdamim, 1940); see also Martha Himmelfarb "R. Moses the Preacher and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *AJS Review*, 9 (1984): 55-78; M. Gaster, "The Hebrew text of one of the Testaments

For Robert Grosseteste and Matthew Paris, as for many of the text's modern readers, the *Testaments* clearly offered a unique opportunity to reconstruct the role of early "Judaism" in Christian history. Grosseteste's decision to translate this particular text fits in well with one of his predominant theological concerns, the role of Mosaic Law in the time following the advent of Christ. In his exegetical tract from the 1230s, *De Cessatione Legalium* (On the Cessation of the Ritual Torah), Grosseteste seeks to prove that any observance of Jewish ritual law is heretical. Invoking many of the same prooftexts as contemporary Christian disputations with Jews (in particular all of Isaiah 53 on God's "suffering servant), Grosseteste shows that Christ's incarnation and death fulfills the Jewish prophetic texts.[51] The "seed of Abraham" promised in Genesis 17 is not only Isaac but, through the line of Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, and David, this seed is Jesus, God and man in whom "all peoples are blessed," as well.[52] In the final and most scathingly polemical section of *De Cessatione*, Grosseteste rails against those who maintain the "dead works of the law" after the advent of Christ:

> To perform the ritual laws as laws—those things which are only signs of the pious life, and the shadows, testimonies, and prophecies of Christ's coming, and only beneficial as a foretokening of Christ who is the only true savior—is altogether a wicked sin, since it rejects Christ and preaches that there is another Messiah yet to come, just as the infidel Jews still do.[53]

It stands to reason, then, that Grosseteste prized the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* as a work which offers a kind of scriptural evidence that the

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of the Twelve Patriarchs," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 16-17 (1893): 33-49; and John Reeves, "Exploring the Afterlife of Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Medieval Near Eastern Religious Traditions: Some Initial Soundings," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 30 (1999): 148-77. My book in progress, *Jacob's Shipwreck*, will consider the contest between Jews and Christians over postbiblical writing in greater depth.

[51] Grosseteste, *De Cessatione Legalium*, ed. Richard C. Dales and Edward King (London: British Academy, 1986), 95-6. See also Anna Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1995), 94-106.

[52] Grossesteste, *De Cessatione Legalium*, 89.

[53] "Facere itaque legalia tanquam legalia hoc est tanquam vivencia vita pie significationis, et tanquam umbram et testamonia et prophetalia Christi venturi, et tanquam salutifera per Christi presignationem, qui solus est vera salus, omnino nefas est post Christum, quia hoc est abnegare Christum et predicare alium adhuc venturum, quemadmodum adhuc faciunt infideles Judei." Grosseteste, *De Cessatione Legalium*, 168.

patriarchs themselves, even as they exhorted their children to adhere to the practices of Jewish Law, recognized the eventual supercession of the Torah and prophesied the coming of Jesus as the awaited Messiah. For Grosseteste and Matthew, the text's survival also demonstrated that, from early on, "modern" rabbinic Jews have tried to suppress their own explicitly prophetic texts. Certainly, the *Testaments*' own thematic emphasis on literary circulation, its representation of the patriarchs as both readers and writers of prophecies, lends itself to their imagination of a deliberate censorship.

The appearance of Grosseteste's translation of the *Testaments* in the same year that copies of the Talmud were burned by the cartload in Paris is no coincidence. The bishop's presentation of the text participates in an identical ideological construction to that of the judges of how the "modern" Jews have essentially rejected their own prophets in favor of a false and heretical text that is unremittingly hostile to the Christian Messiah. Another text that Grosseteste translated from Greek into Latin, the entry on "Jesus" from the tenth-century Byzantine encyclopedia *Suidas*, addresses similar suspicions of the Jews' understanding of Christ. In this extraordinary account, set in the time of Justinian, a Jewish leader admits to his Christian friend that certain Jews actually know that Jesus is the Messiah: "I shall entrust a mystery to you, which is kept hidden by us Hebrews, from which we know full well that the Christ worshipped by you Christians is the very one prophesied by the Law and the Prophets; not only from the ancient writings themselves, but also from the mystery written down and hidden by us."[54] The "mystery," as the text explains, is a codex from the Temple that recorded the names of new priests and both of their parents. The other priests elected Jesus, who in this story conveniently comes from a "mixing" of the tribes of Judah and Levi, allowing him to be both the Davidic Messiah and a priest; his mother was then questioned about his birth. As the Jew Theodosius tells his Christian friend Philippus, the codex, with its revelation of how Mary gave birth to "a son of the Holy Spirit," was "saved from the Temple with great trouble by… the Jews at the time of the capture of Jerusalem, and was deposited in Tiberias." And, he adds, "the

[54] David J. Wasserstein, "Grosseteste, the Jews, and Medieval Christian Hebraism," in *Robert Grosseteste: New Perspectives on His Thought and Scholarship*, ed. James McEvoy (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 357-76. See also A. C. Dionisotti, "On the Greek Studies of Robert Grosseteste," in *The Uses of Greek and Latin*, ed. A. C. Dionisotti, Anthony Grafton and Jill Kraye (London: Warburg Institute, 1988), 19-38.

mystery is known only to very few and faithful people of our nation."[55] Grosseteste's translation of the *Suidas*'s Jesus entry, which frequently circulated in thirteenth-century manuscripts together with the Latin *Testaments*, reveals how both texts were interpreted; in light of the "Jesus" story, the *Testaments* become another secret codex that the rabbis attempted to conceal after the fall of Jerusalem by means of their mastery of the Hebrew language and the circumstances of the Diaspora.[56]

It is possible that Grosseteste, like Andrew of St-Victor and Herbert of Bosham, even learned some Hebrew to further his study of scripture. On the authority of the fourteenth-century exegete Henry of Cossey, Beryl Smalley and Raphael Loewe have accepted that Grosseteste commissioned the Latin-Hebrew psalter known as the *Superscriptio Lincolniensis*, a new "word-for-word" literal translation that appears in several English manuscripts. The project was an unusual collaboration between Christian and Jewish scholars: the Hebrew texts in these psalters, written by either Jews or converts, read (like Latin) from left to right; the alterations to the Latin translations from Jerome's "Gallican" and "Hebrew" versions clearly demonstrate the influence of Rashi and other Jewish exegetes.[57] Moreover, Smalley attributes a preface that appears in the earliest of the *superscriptio* manuscripts to Grosseteste himself. Employing the well-worn metaphor of Jacob and Esau, the text asserts that the point of the translation is to convert Jews to Christian belief:

> In order to quiet the collision and conflict of these two in their mother's womb, it profits us… to bring the nations together into the unity of faith under the guidance of Christ, by reconciling their differences through a knowledge of both tongues and both scriptures, and to set them side by side, lest because they differ they should forever fight. The zeal of God's house incites me to edit the Hebrew scripture that it may confirm the faithful and convert the infidel.[58]

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[55] See Wasserstein's translation of the *Suidas* entry in "Grosseteste, the Jews, and Medieval Christian Hebraism," 367-71.

[56] The surviving thirteenth-century manuscripts that include both texts are British Library Add. 18210, BL Royal 4.D.vii, and Cambridge, St. John's 184. See S. Harrison Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 64-5.

[57] Smalley, *Hebrew Scholarship among Christians in XIIIth Century England as Illustrated by Some Hebrew-Latin Psalters* (London: Shapiro, Valentine, 1939); Loewe, "The Medieval Christian Hebraists of England: The Superscriptio Lincolniensis," *HUCA*, 28 (1957): 205-52.

[58] Smalley, *Hebrew Scholarship among Christians*, 8.

The bishop's interest in the *Hebraica Veritas* of the Psalms, like his interest in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* or the "codex" of the *Suidas*, is as a witness of "authentic" pre-rabbinic Jewish scripture; the alignment of the two languages will inevitably erase Jewish belief as the new Latin version produces a clear Christian meaning. Even as the *Superscriptio* enlists rabbinic exegesis to clarify the more obscure passages of the psalms, the translation as a whole serves as a foil to the independent Jewish textuality exemplified by the Talmud.

Like the parody of textual study in his 1244 ritual murder story, Matthew Paris's account of Grosseteste's translation of *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* in spite of the intractable opposition of the Jews reflects the wider thirteenth-century vilification of the Jewish role in Christian hermeneutics. The twelfth-century Victorine exegetes had frequently reproduced rabbinic interpretations rather than traditional Christian ones, even of messianic passages of the Bible.[59] In his remarkable commentary on Isaiah 11, for example, Andrew of St-Victor goes so far as to suppress the Christian prooftext in favor of a Jewish messianic reading of the twelve tribes' future: "The Lord shall do as it is said above to free the Two Tribes from danger and care. To restore to their land, to reconcile and reduce to one people both Ten and Two, *there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse*. . . ."[60] Matthew's reception of the *Testaments* reads, in this context, like a kind of polemical response to these earlier exegetes' acceptance of Hebrew authority: far from adding to Christian understanding, Jewish eschatology is a dangerous counternarrative which must be disproved through its own secret Hebrew texts. In a second notice of Grosseteste's translation, which Matthew includes in 1252 at the death of the Greek expert John of Basingstoke, he adds to his description of the hidden *Testaments* that each is of the "substance of the Bible" (*de substantia Bibliothecae*).[61] By constructing the *Testaments* as genuine Hebrew prophecy, translated at some indefinite ancient time into Greek, Matthew circumvents the problem of Jewish informants in the text's Hebrew-language transmission and interpretation;

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[59] *Andaeae de Sancto Victore, Expositionem in Ezechielem*, ed. Michael Signer, CCCM (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), xxvii-xxxvii.

[60] Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 138 (from MS Pembroke Camb. 45). See pp. 110-11 on Richard of St. Victor's outrage at Andrew's "Judaizing" commentaries.

[61] *CM*, 5:285. See de Jonge, "Robert Grosseteste and the Testaments," 123; and de Jonge, "The Transmission of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs by Christians," *Vigilae Christianae*, 47 (1993), 1-28.

indeed, he characterizes Grosseteste and his collaborators, like the Greek monks who provided them with their manuscript, as essentially rescuing the biblical *Testaments* from Jewish oblivion.

Given his repeated portrayals of the invading Mongols as remnants of the ten lost Jewish tribes, Matthew's report of the discovery of the *Testaments* in 1242 seems extremely fortuitous: the individual testaments, after all, are purportedly written by the fathers of all the tribes and include a series of prophecies that speak directly to their messianic future. The testament of Levi contains a prophecy that "the Lord will raise up a new priest to whom all the words of the Lord will be revealed… and his star shall rise in heaven like a king."[62] The testament of Judah uses similar messianic terms: "There shall arise from you a star of Jacob in peace: and a man shall arise from my seed like a sun of justice, walking with the sons of men in gentleness and justice, and he will be free of all sin."[63] The latter text also interestingly ends with a prophecy of the reunion of the twelve tribes: "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will return to life again… and my brothers and I will be chiefs, our scepter in Israel.… And there will be one people of the Lord with one language."[64] If for Matthew the underlying threat of the Mongol armies is really a world conquest of Jewish exegesis, a supplanting of the Christian eschatological narrative with that of the Jewish conspirators, the *Testaments* provide a well-timed textual salvo. Even as the language of the Testament of Judah comes perilously close to the dialogue about the liberation of the tribes that Matthew attributes to the arms-smuggling Jews, it is here at least reassuringly contained within a frame of Christian messianism.

The 1245 Council of Lyons, which Robert Grosseteste attended, included an entire constitution on the threat posed by the Tartars that describes them as "a wicked race… seeking to subdue, or rather utterly destroy the Christian people."[65] It was also at this time that Pope Innocent IV

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[62] "Tunc suscitabit deus sacerdotem novum cui omnes sermones domini revelabuntur… et orietur astrum ipsius in celo sicut rex." Grosseteste, *Testamenta*, fol. B iv.

[63] "Et post hec orietur vobis astrum ex Jacob in pace et exurget homo ex semine meo ut sol justicie ambulans cum filiis hominem in mansuetudine et justicia et omne peccatum non invenietur in eo." Grossesteste, *Testamenta*, fol. C iii.

[64] "Et post hoc resurget Abraham Isaac et Jacob in vitam; et ego et fratres mei principes in Israel erimus.… Et erit unus populus domini et lingua una." Grosseteste, *Testamenta*, fols. C. iii-iv.

[65] *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1: *Nicea I-Lateran V*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 297. For a comprehensive

sent the first embassies to the Mongols, which included the Franciscan John of Plano Carpini and the Dominican Simon of St-Quentin, who both wrote detailed accounts of their experiences. I would like to suggest that the immediate interest in and wide dissemination of the bishop's Latin *Testaments* is partly a result of the text's sensational connection, via the ten lost tribes, to the Mongols. The *Testaments* almost immediately enjoyed a wide circulation; numerous English manuscripts survive from the thirteenth century, including one from St. Albans that may have belonged to Matthew Paris himself.[66] Moreover, the Dominican encyclopedist Vincent of Beauvais excerpted the messianic highlights of the *Testaments* in his magisterial *Speculum Historiale* (ca. 1246), in which he also included lengthy selections from John of Plano Carpini's and Simon of St-Quentin's descriptions of the Mongols.[67] The *Testaments* represent a unique artifact: for its Latin readers, the text emerges as a site of contestation between thirteenth-century Jews and Christians over the End of Days and the Messiah, yet unlike in the case of the Hebrew Bible itself, the contest within this "hidden" Jewish text has been decisively won by Christian narrative.

A collection of texts from the Benedictine monastery of Christ's Church at Canterbury in the 1260 to 1270s, now Cambridge Corpus Christi MS 288, also helps to illuminate the immediate textual afterlife of the Mongol-Jewish connection. In an earlier article, I considered the cultural circumstances of this manuscript, owned by Nicholas of Sandwich, prior from 1244 to 1245 and precentor in 1262, which contains copies of four of the letters about the Mongols from Matthew Paris's C*hronica Majora* and *Liber Additamentorum*, including the one from the Hungarian bishop about the Pharisees and Sadducees' Hebrew lessons.[68] The manuscript is a miscellany of Latin works, almost all of which in some way concern the eschatological role of Jews in Christianity: the Pseudo-Augustine sermon on the refusal of Jews to accept the Hebrew prophecies of Jesus and convert; the *Vengeance*

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account of the background of the First Council of Lyons and the participation of Grosseteste, see Davide Bigalli, *I Tartari e l'Apocalisse* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1971); see also James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 31-50.

[66] S. Harrison Thomson lists fifteen thirteenth-century manuscripts in *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste*, 42-4. The St Albans manuscript is now BL Royal MS 4.D.vii.

[67] Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* (Nürnberg: Anton Koberger,1483), cxxv-cxxix; see also Claude Kappler, "L'image des Mongols dans le *Speculum Historiale* de Vincent de Beauvais," in *Vincent de Beauvais: Intentions et Réceptions d'une Oeuvre Encyclopédique du Moyen Âge* (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1990), 219-40.

[68] Nisse, "'Your name will no longer be Aseneth,'" 745-7.

*of the Savior*, a medieval account of the Fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews; the *Life of Adam and Eve*; two of the Infancy Gospels of Jesus; the *Book of Aseneth*, on the conversion of Joseph's Egyptian wife; and the apocalyptic *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*, which lists the nations that Alexander locked away in the mountains.[69] As the monastery's library catalog compiled under the prior Henry Estry (ca. 1300) reveals, Nicholas also owned a copy of Grosseteste's Latin *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Although this manuscript has not survived, a full copy of the *Testaments* owned by a fellow monk, Richard de Weynchepe, who was made prior of Dover in 1268, is now Cambridge, Corpus Christi MS. 441; interestingly, Richard also owned a copy of the popular Latin *Gesta Alexander*, one of the favorite medieval sources for speculation about Asian cultures.[70]

The sense of a direct Mongol threat had subsided in Europe with the withdrawal of Hülegü Khan from Syria and the defeat of his remaining army by the Egyptian Mamluks at Ayn Jalut in 1260.[71] The situation of English Jews, however, had continued to deteriorate, especially with the persecutions and forced conversions in London, Canterbury, and elsewhere during the baronial wars of the 1260s. The monastic manuscripts from Canterbury and elsewhere are, I argue, evidence of a textual study that attempted to make sense of the local Jews with sources from outside of the Hebrew Bible, that is, from biblical Apocrypha, Apocalypse, and—in the case of the Mongol letters—recent history. In the period immediately preceding the expulsion of the Jews in 1290, the compiler of the Christ's Church manuscript, as well as other Canterbury monks, sought to interpret the history of the future by means of texts that remain flexibly between history and fiction, scripture and legend.[72] Pseudo-Methodius's

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[69] W. J. Aerts and G. A. A Kortekaas, *Die Apocalypse des Pseudo-Methodius:* die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Ubersetzungen, 2 (Louvain: Peeters, 1998), 1:117-19, translated in McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 73.

[70] M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: University Press, 1912), 2:349-55. For an account of Richard's tumultuous career as prior of Dover and his removal by Archbishop Robert Kilwardby in 1273, see the *Gesta Regum Continuata* in Gervase of Canterbury, *Chronicles*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 (London: Longman, 1879-80), 2:247-83.

[71] Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 165-95; David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 145-58.

[72] In his preface to the *Speculum Historiale*, Vincent of Beauvais characterizes the apocrypha as texts that illuminate scripture but for which "there is no certainty of truth." See Nisse, "'Your name will no longer be Aseneth,'" 746.

*Revelations* claims that the prophets Enoch and Elijah will return during the time of Antichrist to "lead the Jews into the church"; in light of this popular vision of the end of history, the other texts become a kind of fantastic, multivocal genealogy of the English Jewish population: they are exiles from Jerusalem, distant relatives of Jesus (in the Infancy Gospels of Thomas and Pseudo-Matthew), exponents of spiritual conversion (in the *Book of Aseneth*), and also blind deniers of the Christian truth, recent collaborators with the barbaric Mongols, and finally, the twelve tribes who will be rejoined in Christian terms with Jesus as the Messiah. The *Book of Aseneth*, which represents its pagan heroine's conversion to Joseph's Jewish identity in terms easily allegorized by Christians, is closely linked with the *Testaments* in its medieval transmission, particularly after Vincent of Beauvais presented parts of the two texts in sequence in the *Speculum Historiale*'s narrative of Jacob and his sons. Following Vincent, Roger Bacon in his *Opus Maius* defends the apocryphal *Testaments*, in which "each patriarch taught his tribe" about Christ, as a document of authentic scripture that, while not canonical, was "used by Greek and Latin saints and wise men from the beginning of the church."[73]

The transformation from Matthew Paris's anxious reportage of the Mongols' progress through Eastern Europe and the Jews' messianic hopes into the later Canterbury miscellany and the reception of *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* demonstrates the immediate absorption of the news from distant frontiers into a kind of Latin historical romance fueled by the monastic imagination. This genre reaches its height, of course, in the fourteenth century with *Mandeville's Travels*, in which "Sir John," a French or Anglo-Norman monk pretending to be a knight, recalls his journey to everywhere short of the Earthly Paradise. In homage, perhaps, to Matthew Paris's geographic writings and world maps, Mandeville claims that he was "born and raised in England in the town of St. Albans."[74] The geopolitical circumstances have, however, changed to suit the romance: Mandeville himself spends time as a soldier in the service of the Great Khan and says

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[73] Quoted by de Jonge, "Robert Grosseteste," 124-5.

[74] The Paris text reads: "[N]ez et nourris dengleterre de la ville de Saint Aubin…." *Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations*, ed. Malcolm Letts, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953), 2:231. The current standard account of the background and sources of *Mandeville's Travels* is M. C. Seymour's monograph *Sir John Mandeville* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993). Seymour, however, far overstates the argument against an English origin for the text's author.

much of his vast empire, immense wealth, and nobility. The ten lost tribes, he affirms, are still locked up in the Caspian hills where Alexander left them; if any of them do manage to get out "they can speak no language but Hebrew and so cannot speak with other people." Yet he also includes the following apocalyptic scenario that hinges on the learning of the other two tribes:

> And therefore all the Jews who live in all lands always learn to speak Hebrew in the hope that when those of the Caspian mountains issue forth, the other Jews will know how to talk to them. And they teach that language to their children in order to destroy Christendom. For the other Jews say they know well by their prophecies that those of Caspie will emerge and spread out through the world and that the Christians will be in subjection to them just as they have been in subjection to the Christians.[75]

As Iain Higgins concludes from this passage, in *Mandeville's Travels* "neither the Tartars nor the Saracens, but the Jews are the enemy par excellence."[76] Their danger to Europe, uniquely, comes not from territorial power but from their unassimilated prophecies. Long gone from the England of Matthew Paris, Robert Grosseteste, and the fictional "Sir John," the Jews of the 1350s have become in their Diaspora the embodiment of Hebrew text itself, a menacing phantom of the East and the library.

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[75] Higgins, *Writing East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 184 (I have made some minor emendations to his translation). "Et combein que aucun en isse aucune fois, si ne sceuent il nul langaige fors Ebrieu, dont il ne sceuent parler as gens. Et non pour quant si on quilz istront hors au temps que Antecrist venra, et quil feront grans occisions de Crestiens. Et pour ce les Iuys qui demeurent par toutes terres aprennent a parler Ebrieu, sur ceste esperance que ceuls des montaingnes de Caspille, quant ilz istront hors, que ilz sachent parler a eulz. Et de ce langaige ilz entroduisent leurs enfans pour crestiente destruire. Car les autres Iuyfs dient que il sceuent bien par leurs prophecies que ceuls de Caspille istront hors et sespandront par my le monde, et que encore seront Crestiens en leur subieccion, aussi bien quil ont este en la subieccion des Crestiens." *Mandeville's Travels*, 381-2.

[76] Higgins, *Writing East*, 183.